



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the OSCE Mediterranean Seminar in Aqaba, Jordan

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 13, 2003

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I was pleased to participate in the 2003 OSCE Mediterranean Seminar in Aqaba as part of the U.S. delegation. The OSCE does, indeed, have many valuable lessons that it can share with other regions about the process of building a diverse organization devoted to comprehensive security. This concept is particularly relevant in the Middle East, where violent conflict continues to dominate political discourse, thereby undermining the development of civil society and the economy.

The OSCE provides a neutral forum for the Mediterranean Partners to enhance dialogue and cooperation, through the Contact Group and with other OSCE events and we urge our Partners to use this forum to increase understanding and build confidence among and between the countries of the region.

We were pleased to see five out of the six Mediterranean Partners and two of the Asian Partners represented at the Seminar in Aqaba and we urge the Partners for Cooperation to take full advantage of their existing relationship with the OSCE by participating in all of the OSCE seminars, conferences, and meetings to which they are invited. That will be taken by the United States as one very important indicator of their true interest.

At a recent Special Meeting of the Permanent Council, we were pleasantly surprised to see almost all of the Mediterranean Partners in attendance and we hope this high level of interest and participation will continue.

We look forward to future discussions in Vienna about the recommendations and proposals that came out of the Seminar in Aqaba and the fact that many of these proposals came from Mediterranean Partner states was particularly encouraging to us. The responsibility, however, now falls on the Partners to garner the support for these proposals and to make sure that the follow-up to this Seminar is genuine and practical.

Let me conclude by thanking the conference organizers, including the External Cooperation Section in the Secretariat and the Bulgarian Chair of the Contact Group, for their efforts in putting together the Seminar as well as to the Jordanian government, we extend our sincere thanks and appreciation for the hospitality that we all experienced in Aqaba.

We commend the initiative and dedication of the Jordanian delegation here in Vienna, under the leadership of Ambassador Touq, and we look forward to participating in the future work of the Contact Group. Thank you.